

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated July 27, 2005, claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wright et al. Claims 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wright et al. Claims 17-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wright et al. Claims 28-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wright et al.

Applicant notes with appreciation the interview courteously afforded the undersigned counsel for the Applicant on September 7, 2005, wherein the above rejections based on the Wright et al references were discussed. The discussion at the interview, as summarized below, focused on the position of the Applicant that the Wright et al reference does not disclose or suggest a data center that is remote from the terminal equipment with which the data center interacts. At the interview, the possibility was discussed of amending the independent claims to specifically refer to the data center as being a "remote data center," but the Examiner was not willing to make a firm commitment at the interview as to whether such an amendment would raise a new issue, and thus was not willing to make a commitment that such an amendment would place the application in condition for allowance.

Following the interview, the undersigned counsel again considered the existing claim language, and believes that the preambles in each of the respective independent claims, which already refer to a data center and "remotely-located terminal equipment" adequately incorporate the fact in the claim language that the data center and the terminal equipment are remote from each other. As discussed at the interview, this is also inherent in the commonly understood meaning that those of ordinary skill in the field of data transmission have with regard to the term "data

center." Since the Examiner at the interview expressed concerns that amending the claims to insert the word "remote" might raise a new issue, Applicant submits that prosecution can be better advanced by relying on the existing claim language, and the commonly understood meaning of the term "data center," rather than making an Amendment to the claims at this stage of prosecution, after the final rejection.

In previous responses, Applicant argued that the Wright et al reference teaches only entering data into terminal equipment by means of a programmed memory card that must be inserted into the terminal equipment in order to interface with the terminal equipment. Since this is the only means for entering data into the terminal equipment that is disclosed in the Wright et al reference at any location, Applicant assumed that the Examiner must be referring to this programmed card as being the same as, or the equivalent of, the "data center" that is used in the language of every independent claim of the application. Applicant not only argued that such a card does not fall within the commonly understood meaning of those of ordinary skill in the field of data transmission for the term "data center," but also argued that when the programmed, data-carrying card is capable of interacting with the terminal equipment, it must necessarily be inserted into the terminal equipment, and is therefore not "remote" from the terminal equipment.

In response to these arguments, at paragraph 4 on page 2 of the final rejection, the Examiner directed Applicant's attention to column 14, lines 41-60 in the Wright et al reference. As discussed at the interview, Applicant is unable to find any statement whatsoever in that passage that refers to, or could be interpreted as a reference to, a "data center," remote or otherwise. At the interview, the Examiner was unable to identify any specific language in that passage that the Examiner

considered to provide a clear teaching of a "data center" as well. The Examiner stated at the interview, however, that she wanted to again thoroughly review the Wright et al reference to be sure that there were no other passages in the Wright et al reference that might provide such a teaching.

Applicant and his counsel have carefully reviewed the entirety of the Wright et al reference, and are confident that when the Examiner again reviews that reference, the Examiner will agree that there is no teaching anywhere in that reference of the use of a "data center" as that term is commonly understood by those of ordinary skill in the relevant technology.

The aforementioned passage cited by the Examiner refers to the service card being loaded into the terminal MPU 30. The terminal MPU30 is the microprocessor that is located in the terminal unit, and can be accessed by the service card (or other data-carrying cards), only by those cards being physically inserted in the terminal equipment. At the interview, counsel noted that Figure 2a of the Wright et al reference shows the card MPU as a separate block from the terminal 20 and the terminal MPU30, connected thereto by arrowed lines, however, these arrowed lines merely schematically indicate the flow of data between the card MPU and the terminal MPU 30, via a handshake channel 61, and do not indicate any "remoteness" of the card or the card MPU from the terminal MPU30. This is made explicitly clear in Figure 7 of the Wright et al reference, wherein each card is shown as being inserted in the unit 20', so as to be able to communicate with the terminal MPU30 thereof.

Therefore, there is no data source ("data center" or otherwise) that is located remote from the terminal equipment, as explicitly required in each of the independent

claims of the present application. Moreover, there is no component in the Wright et al reference that corresponds to a "data center" as that term is commonly understood by those of ordinary skill in the relevant technology.

As discussed at the interview, the term "data center" inherently means, or refers to, a center that is remote from the terminal units with which it communicates. Such communication may be wireless or by land lines, but in all instances the data center is located remote from the terminal equipment that it services. This is made clear in the present application by the indication in Figure 1 of the communication between the data center DC and the I/O controller 4 via the modem 23.

This is also consistent with almost every reference that the Examiner has made of record. In United States Patent No. 5,008,827 (Sansone et al), the PB data center 18 (Fig. 1) and the central station 18 (Fig. 4) are clearly remote from the terminal equipment with which they communicate.

In United States Patent No. 6,064,994 (Kubatzki et al), the data central DC is clearly indicated as communicating with a postage meter machine FM via line 17, clearly a remote arrangement.

In United States Patent No. 5,715,164 (Llechti et al), the data center 15 is again shown to communicate wirelessly with postage meters 101-1 through 101-P.

In United States Patent No. 4,752,950 (Le Carpentier), the central station 2 communicates with a telephone network 3 via modems 6V, and the telephone network 3, in turn, communicates with local stations 4X through 4Z respectively via modems 6X through 6Z. Again, a remote arrangement.

The same is true in numerous references cited by the Applicant.

In United States Patent No. 5,699,415 (Wagner), for example, the data center 18 is clearly shown as communicating with the user station 10 via communication terminal equipment 14 and 16, and communication line 15. Again, a remote arrangement.

The same is true in United States Patent No. 4,097,923 (Eckert, Jr. et al), wherein the blocks 1 represent remote postage meter stations capable of communicating with a data center represented by block 5 (column 5, lines 50-52).

European Application 0 647 925 shows a data center 112 communicating with a so-called "postage evidencing device" 114, again in a remote arrangement.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of other examples could be cited.

It is thus abundantly clear that the term "data center" as used in the claims of the present application inherently means a device that is located remote from the terminal equipment. This, in addition to the aforementioned explicit statements in the preambles of each of the independent claims, clearly precludes the Wright et al reference from reading on any of those claims.

Applicant recognizes that the Examiner is required to give all terms in a patent claim the broadest reasonable interpretation. Applicant submits, however, this does not permit the Examiner to ignore common, well-understood meanings for terms, otherwise every term having a well-understood meaning would have to be re-defined in each patent claim in which it is used. As long as there is nothing in the claim language itself, and nothing in the specification, to indicate that a word having a common, well-understood meaning to those of ordinary skill in the relevant technology is being used in a manner contrary to that well-understood meaning, the

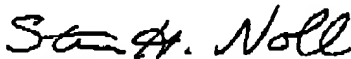
well-understood meaning must be accepted, and the claim interpreted according to that well-understood meaning.

Applicant respectfully submits that such is the case in each of the independent claims of the present application. In view of the complete absence anywhere in the Wright et al reference of the use of a "data center" or any equivalent component for entering data into a terminal unit in the manner set forth in the independent claims of the present application, the Wright et al reference does not anticipate, nor render obvious, any of those independent claims.

The respective sets of dependent claims depending from those independent claims add further features to the novel and non-obvious content of the independent claims. The Wright et al reference, therefore, does not anticipate, nor render obvious, any of the dependent claims, for the same reasons discussed above with regard to the independent claims.

All claims of the application are therefore submitted to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Submitted by,



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